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KT photo | **Rob Burgess**

DREAM TO REALITY: This sign sits Sunday in front of the newly-finished house in the 400 block of Kingston Road. The house is the 49th house the Habitat for Humanity of the Kokomo Community chapter has completed in the area.



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DEDICATION: With the words, “May this light be a sign of the presence of Christ in your home and may he always be your guide,” Sarah Stoldt, left, holds a candle which Rev. Mark Sloss, executive director of Kokomo Habitat for Humanity, right, lights during Sunday’s Habitat for Humanity dedication.

Habitat for Humanity helps woman fulfill wish

By Carson Gerber
Tribune staff writer

As a little girl, Sarah Stoldt remembers her favorite game was playing house with her niece. She loved pretending it was her own home — a place where she could be a mother and raise her children.

But with the help of Kokomo Habitat for Humanity, make-believe became reality when Stoldt moved into her brand-new home on Kingston Road in July.

“It’s kind of a little girl’s dream that’s turned into a big girl’s dream,” she said Sunday during a dedication ceremony, where friends, family members and Habitat officials and volunteers gathered to celebrate her new home. “I can’t even explain it. It’s just a dream of mine that’s literally come true. It’s overwhelming.”

It’s a truth Stoldt memorialized on her living-room wall with the words “Dream until your dreams come true” painted in flowing script beside a large, bronze star.

Although Stoldt, 31, doesn’t currently have children, she said her new home will be a great place to bring up her kids when she does decide to have them.

“I know it’s just me and I don’t have any kids, but I’ve always wanted a house that I could raise a family in,” she said.

And with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a full kitchen and large living room, the 1,120 square-foot house should provide ample space for just that.

Stoldt took the first step towards her dream in February 2011, when a manager at her job working in the installed sales department at Lowe's told her to go to a Habitat for Humanity informational meeting.

"Everything kind of worked out from there," she said. "I put in my application, started on my sweat-equity hours ... and here's the house."

In fact, Stoldt said she put in over 400 hours — or 150 hours more than the minimum requirement stipulated by Habitat — hammering, sawing and doing whatever needed done along side Habitat volunteers to construct the house.

"I felt I owed it to the volunteers. I didn't want them to be here without me here. It was important to me," she said. "Now I can actually tell my kids, 'Mom helped build this house,' along with all the volunteers who put in their time and love. And It's definitely a house built with love."

Stoldt said she spent so much time with the volunteers that she knows where people signed the walls, who put in the dry wall or where someone accidentally hit their thumbs while driving in nails.

"This house is already full of memories," she said.

Rev. Mark Sloss, executive director of Kokomo Habitat for Humanity, said construction on the house began in November 2011, and the frame went up on Dec. 3.

“We moved pretty fast building this one,” he said.

For Stoldt, the hours spent building the house also had a unforeseen benefit — giving her hands-on experience that she said made her a more informed employee at Lowe’s, where she’s worked for over three years.

“This helps me with my job, too,” she said. “Now I know what my customers are talking about when they have issues. So it’s been an all around good experience.”

The house on Kingston Road marks the 49th building constructed by Habitat in Howard County. The 50th house, at 816 W. Woodland Ave., is currently under construction and should be finished later this year.

To celebrate the occasion, the organization has launched a campaign called “50 for the 50th,” with goals like signing up 50 first-time donors, 50 first-time volunteers and raising \$50,000 for the 50th house.

Anyone interested in volunteering or donating can call Kokomo Habitat for Humanity at 765-452-2185 or visit www.habitatkokomo.com.

- **Carson Gerber**, Tribune reporter, may be reached by calling 765-854-6739 or via email at carson.gerber@kokomotribune.com.